

Contact Dermatitis - Irritant

Definition

- Red area of the skin from contact with an irritant

Health Information

Symptoms

- Rash on one small part of the body (localized)
- Red or pink rash
- Small spots or solid redness
- Flaking or peeling of the skin can also occur.
- Unlike allergic contact dermatitis, usually not itchy.

Causes

- Skin contact with an irritant (such as a harsh chemical).
- If it's just on the fingers, it's usually due to a soap or hand cream. Rubber gloves can also be a cause.
- Not an allergic reaction

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Most new localized rashes are due to skin contact with an irritant.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Avoid the Cause:

- Try to find the cause and avoid it.
- Consider irritants like a plant (such as evergreens or weeds). Also, chemicals (such as solvents). Irritants also can include fiberglass or soaps. A new cosmetic or new jewelry may also be the cause.
- A pet may carry the irritant. Some children react directly to pet saliva.

3. Do Not Use Soap:

- Wash the red area once with soap. Reason: To remove any irritants left on the skin.
- Then, do not use soaps on it. Reason: Soaps can slow healing.
- Cleanse the area when needed with warm water.

4. Steroid Cream:

- If the rash becomes itchy, put on 1% hydrocortisone cream.
- No prescription is needed.
- Use it 3 times per day.
- Exception: Do not use for suspected ringworm.

5. Try Not to Scratch:

- Help your child not to scratch the rash.
- Cut the fingernails short.

6. What to Expect:

- Most of these rashes go away in 2 to 3 days.

7. Return to School:

- Your child does not need to miss any child care or school.

Call Your Doctor If

- Rash spreads or gets worse
- Rash lasts for more than 1 week
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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